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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, Los Angeles (44-1574)

DATE: June 12, 1968

FROM : SA GILBERT G. BENJAMIN

SUBJECT: MURKIN

The following information is set forth to indicate steps taken in an attempt to locate LESTER EDWARD PACKETT, for interview in order to resolve allegations made by "BOB" LNU (believed to be identical to PACKETT) to the "Los Angeles Times."

Inquiry at Sybil Brand Institution for Women, 6/11/68, revealed that ODELIA PACKETT, estranged wife of LESTER EDWARD PACKETT, had been released on 6/10/68, following completion of sentence with time off for good behavior. No forwarding address for her was recorded.

Miss POLLY NOVOTNY, Legal Secretary to Attorney PHI O. CLOUGH, Room 900, 403 West Eighth Street, Los Angeles (telephone 623-5858), advised during the afternoon of 6/11/68, that ODELIA PACKETT had been in telephonic contact with her and Mr. CLOUGH during the morning of 6/11/68, but she did not furnish a residence address. She was inquiring about the progress of her divorce action against LESTER PACKETT. She said that she did not know his current whereabouts, where he could be served with legal papers surrounding the divorce action. Miss NOVOTNY, said that Attorney CLOUGH was out of the office and would not be available until noon or later on 6/12/68. Photos of LESTER PACKETT, FRANK BRICKLEY, and JAMES EARL RAY, were exhibited to Miss NOVOTNY and she was unable to identify any of the photos as anyone she had seen in person.

Senor AGUILAR, 212 West 41st Street, (telephone 232-7366) who speaks very little English, advised he is the father of ODELLA PACKETT. He said he did not know where she was living, nor where LESTER EDWARD PACKETT could be located. He stated that his daughter ANTONIA AGUILAR, who gets home from work about 6:30 to 7:00 PM each evening, might know the location of ODELLA PACKETT. ANTONIA AGUILAR is the younger sister of ODELLA PACKETT.

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From information she had furnished, when originally interviewed by SA FRANCIS G. KAHL and the writer on 5/21/68, ODELLA PACKETT reported that she was living with one JOHNNY SIMMONS at the time of her arrest. She said that he was residing at the Bellevue Hotel in Los Angeles, the last she had heard. She indicated that it was her intention to go back to living with him, upon her release from jail in June 1968.

Acting on the above information, SAS KAHL and BENJAMIN interviewed Mr. CLARENCE HOLBEIN, Day Clerk, Bellevue Hotel, 1809 West 11th Street, Los Angeles, on 6/11/68. He said that JOHNNY SIMMONS had lived at the Bellevue Hotel until about June 6 or 7, 1968, at which time he moved out and left no forwarding address. He said that a telephone call had been received earlier in the day (6/11/68) from SIMMONS, asking if any mail had arrived for him. None had, so he said he would be calling back again in a day or two. He did not leave any forwarding address, nor did he indicate from where he was calling, except to state he was calling from out of town. The agents' names and office telephone number were left with Mr. HOLBEIN, with the request that he contact them if he should learn the whereabout of either SIMMONS or ODELLA PACKETT. He said that a red-headed woman, named ODELLA (LNU) had resided with SIMMONS for a brief period of time over a month ago. Photos of FRANK BRICKLEY and LESTER EDWARD PACKETT were exhibited to CLARENCE HOLBEIN, who was unable to identify any of the individuals as anyone he had seen previously.

At approximately 7:25 P.M., 6/11/68, Mr. LOUIS ROTH, Manager, Hotel Bellevue, 1809 W. 11th St. (telephone DUnkirk 6-9802) telephonically contacted the writer. He said that he had not been on duty at the hotel at the time SAS interviewed his Day Clerk (HOLBEIN). He said that he recalled both ODELLA and JOHNNY SIMMONS. He said that SIMMONS had moved out of the hotel on Friday or Saturday, 6/7-8/68, and had not left any forwarding address. He said that SIMMONS was quite anxious to get some mail from an unknown source, and had contacted the hotel since he moved to ascertain whether or not the mail had arrived. He did not on any of these occasions indicate his present location. Mr. ROTH recalled that a FRANK (LNU), who worked at the Olympian Liquor Store connected with the Olympian Motor Hotel, 1903 West Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles; had helped SIMMONS move, and he was sure this person would know the location of SIMMONS new residence.

LEAMONT WHITE, employee of the Western Union, 741 South Flower, Los Angeles was interviewed during the early evening of 6/11/68. He reported that he had not seen "BOB", whom he had previously identified from photographs as being identical with LESTER EDWARD PACKETT, since the last time he was interviewed in May 1968. He did say;however, that FRANK BRICKLEY had been in Los Angeles this past week, from Wednesday evening, June 5, 1968 to at least Sunday afternoon, June 9, 1968. He said that FRANK had called him at Western Union on Wednesday, stating he had just arrived in town and wanted WHITE to come to the Greyhound Bus Station at 6th and Los Angeles Streets to pick him up, which WHITE did. He said that BRICKLEY lived in his (WHITE's) apartment during the five days he was in Los Angeles. The last he saw of BRICKLEY was Sunday about 11:30 AM to Noon, when he dropped BRICKLEY off at the Original Pantry restaurant, on the corner of 9th and Figueroa, Los Angeles, where BRICKLEY said he wanted to see some "old friends"(not otherwise identified), before heading back home.

According to WHITE, BRICKLEY had indicated he wanted to get in touch with PACKETT, and he had gone to various former haunts of PACKETT along west Seventh and Eighth Streets in the vicinity of Alvarado, without success. BRICKLEY allegedly indicated that he assumed that PACKETT was "not in town," in view of the lack of success he had in trying to locate him.

Mr. FRANK A. BARNES, 1044 South Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles, who is employed as the night manager of the Olympian Liquor Store, 1903 West Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles, was interviewed by the writer at his place of employment, during the evening of 6/11/68. He did not know JOHNNY SIMMONS or ODELLA PACKETT by name; but said that "in order to make a few extra bucks" he had helped a young man (in his late 20's, Caucasian) move from the Hotel Bellevue, the previous week end. He said he was amazed at the amount of luggage that individual had. He said he had over eleven pieces of baggage. He said he could not remember the exact location of the apartment building into which he had helped this unknown man moved; but he would be able to point it out. BARNES was driven to the Cynthia Apartments, at 1110 South Lake Street (near the intersection of South Lake and 11th Streets, one block west of Alvarado), which he pointed out as the location he had helped the above unknown white male move to the previous weekend.

Mr. ROY WHEATLEY, Manager, Cynthia Apartments, 1110 South Lake Street, advised the writer on 6/11/68, that his records indicate JOHN SIMMONS, moved into Room 300, in the Cynthia Apts., on Friday, June 7, 1968. The following Monday, a red-headed woman, described by SIMMONS as his wife (name not mentioned), moved in with SIMMONS.

Mr. WHEATLEY, whose telephone number is 388-8257, reported there is no telephone in the SIMMONS apartment. He said that SIMMONS told him he was employed at the A&P grocery store, on North Vermont Avenue, just north of Hollywood Boulevard. Mr. WHEATLEY did not know the hours of SIMMONS reported employment.

On the morning of 6/12/68, Mr. WHEATLEY stated that he had not seen either SIMMONS or his "wife" come down from their third floor apartment yet.

SAS KAHL and the writer located JOHN FREDERICK SIMMONS in apartment 300, Cynthia Apartments, 1110 South Lake Street, Los Angeles, California, on the morning of 6/12/68. He was partially dressed. ODELLA PACKETT was in the apartment with him. They were interviewed together. SIMMONS stated he was born in Old Shawneetown, Illinois, in 1941. He said he is currently unemployed and drawing unemployment compensation. He said he last saw LESTER EDWARD PACKETT on the street, near 7th and Alvarado, about three months ago. Said it was the only time in his life that he had seen PACKETT. Photos of FRANK BRICKLEY, his brother, JAMES EARL RAY, and LESTER PACKETT were exhibited to SIMMONS. He stated he did not recognize any of them; but he did think that the photo of PACKETT (which was not identified to him) resembled his recollection of PACKETT slightly; but he did not think it was a good likeness if it was actually PACKETT. (It is to be noted that in late-May 1968, LEAMONT WHITE picked this photo out of a group of others of different individuals and stated it was an excellent likeness of PACKETT).

ODELLA PACKETT stated that she had just been released from the Los Angeles County Jail (Sybil Brand Institution), on 6/10/68. She said that she had not seen or heard from LESTER EDWARD PACKETT during the period of her confinement in jail, nor since her release. She said that she had been in touch with her lawyer, PHI O. CLOUGH on 6/11/68, and had been unable to tell her lawyer where PACKETT could be located in order that he might be served with legal documents relating to the impending divorce. She said that she had also been in touch with her family, during the evening of 6/11/68, and they had advised her that the FBI had been by the house looking for her. She said that she had spent Monday and Tuesday, 6/11-12/68, applying for her unemployment compensation and in looking for employment. She said she had not yet obtained a job.

Both ODELLA PACKETT and JOHN SIMMONS advised they would contact this office, if they learned of the location of LESTER PACKETT.

On 6/12/68, SAS KAHL and BENJAMIN checked the criminal records of the Los Angeles Police Department, and nothing identifiable with LESTER EDWARD PACKETT was located.

Attorney PHI O. CLOUGH telephonically contacted SA BENJAMIN at noon on 6/12/68, to advise that he had been contacted the previous date by ODELA PACKETT, concerning her divorce action. She indicated at that time she had no idea where her estranged husband was located. Mr. CLOUGH told her under the circumstances that he would have to serve Mr. PACKETT "by publication." He said this would take a little longer than a personal service. CLOUGH said that Mrs. PACKETT had not indicated her residence address when she called the day before. He said if LESTER PACKETT's current address came to his attention, he would notify the writer.

Efforts to locate LESTER PACKETT are continuing. Leads are being set out for Sacramento to check CII and DMV for possible leads.